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Harakat ul-Ansar: Increasing Threat to Western and Pakistani Interests

The Harakat ul-Ansar (HUA), an Islamic extremist organization that Pakistan supports in its proxy war against Indian forces in Kashmir, increasingly is using terrorist tactics against Westerners and random attacks on civilians that could involve Westerners to promote its pan-Islamic agenda:

- Since early 1994, the HUA has kidnapped at least 13 individuals—12 of whom are Westerners.

Against the backdrop of possible declining support from Islamabad, the HUA is discussing financing with sponsors of international terrorism who are virulently anti-US and may encourage attacks on US targets. The HUA may be seeking this assistance from such sources—including terrorist financier Usama Bin Ladin and Libyan leader Mu'ammarr Qadhafi—in an attempt to offset losses resulting from the drop in Pakistani support.

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Islamabad also is at risk of being a target of HUA terrorism, particularly if it further reduces its support for the HUA or clamps down on the group's activities. Antigovernment sentiment among HUA leaders is already strong and could grow further.

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The terrorist threat from the HUA is increasing as the group shifts from attacks on Indian security forces in Kashmir to Westerners and civilian targets—which could involve Westerners—outside of Kashmir. HUA leaders have expressed intense hatred of the West, and

Kashmir Hostages: Probably Not Alive (U)

The four Western hostages kidnapped over a year ago by Al-Faran—a codename for the Harakat ul-Ansar—probably were killed in December:

- A high-level HUA militant captured by Indian security forces told US interrogators that the hostages were killed on 13 December because Indian security forces had killed the kidnappers' leader earlier that month, and the group was under pressure from the Indian Army. Much of the captured militant's other information has been corroborated by other sources.

Nevertheless, a search for the hostages' bodies was unsuccessful. Indian security forces continue to receive claims of hostage sightings, but they discount the credibility of most of the reports.

additional attacks against Western interests would be consistent with the group's philosophy of jihad against non-Muslims:

- Since early 1994, the HUA has kidnapped a total of 13 people—12 of whom are Westerners—in four separate incidents. The HUA has voluntarily released two of the victims, five were rescued or escaped, and at least two—and probably six—were murdered.

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[redacted] the HUA may have assisted the Jammu and Kashmir Islamic Front in carrying out the Lajpat Nagar market bombing in May 1996 in New Delhi that killed 13 persons, according to US Embassy reports. (S [redacted])

The HUA may be preparing to begin attacking civilian or VIP aircraft in India.

[redacted] HUA contacts of Embassy New Delhi have hinted that they might undertake terrorist actions against civilian airliners.

[redacted] Attacks on civilian aircraft in India could well involve Western casualties, given the large numbers of Western tourists in that country. (S [redacted])

Reaching Out to International Terrorist Supporters (S)

The HUA is attempting to expand its ties to foreign supporters of international terrorism that are virulently anti-US and may further encourage the group to attack US interests. Although the group has long had international connections, recent HUA requests for money from these terrorist supporters—at least one of which coincided with declining Pakistani support—suggests these contacts are more than routine:

Islamabad is Backing Away . . . (S)

Islamabad appears to be scaling back its support for the HUA, probably out of concern that its ties to the group will prompt the United States to place Pakistan on the list of state sponsors of terrorism:

[redacted] diplomatic reports indicate that ISID provides at least \$30,000—and possibly as much as \$60,000—per month to the HUA.


- In apparently related activity, a senior HUA leader complained about Islamabad's inconsistent policy toward the group. It is unclear if he was referring only [redacted] or whether the ISID has reduced its financial and other support as well. (S [redacted])

. . . But Could Become a Target Itself (e)

Islamabad's compliance with US and UK demands to cease its support for the HUA and crack down on the group's activities could be costly to Islamabad. Pakistan is unlikely to accede fully, but any strong actions aimed at stopping the group's activities might prompt the HUA to retaliate. Although the HUA's operations are primarily targeted against India, some of the group's rhetoric and past actions demonstrate a hostility toward Islamabad that could be fueled by a loss of Islamabad's patronage:


- Elements within the HUA participated in the coup of September 1995 against the Pakistan Army, according to press reporting. The coup's objective was the removal of the civilian government.

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- A senior HUA leader has publicly advocated an Afghan-style change of government in Pakistan that would remove the political, bureaucratic, and military hierarchies. 

Implications for the United States (U)

A cutoff of Pakistani support to the HUA would make the group more likely to accept money from anti-US international terrorist supporters such as Bin Ladin, even if accepting such funds required a shift in targeting strategy. The HUA's underlying hatred of the West and a probable desire for retaliation against the forces pushing Islamabad's efforts increase the likelihood of such a scenario following a crackdown. ~~(S)~~

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